X 3092

REMARKS,

&c.

S30s

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

3082

REMARKS

UPON

ARISTOTELIAN AND PLATONIC

ETHICS,

AS A

BRANCH OF THE STUDIES

PURSUED IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

BY THE

REV. FREDERICK OAKELEY, M.A.

FELLOW OF BALLIOL COLLEGE.

OXFORD,

PRINTED FOR J. H. PARKER;

AND J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

1837.

8062

Such thoughts, the wreck of Paradise,
Through many a dreary age,
Upbore whate'er of good and wise
Yet lived in Bard or Sage:

They marked what agonizing throes
Shook the great mother's womb;
But Reason's spells might not disclose
The gracious birth to come;

* * * * * *

The hour that saw from opening Heaven
Redeeming glory stream,
Beyond the summer hues of even,
Beyond the mid-day beam.

Thenceforth, to eyes of high desire,
The meanest things below,
As with a Seraph's robe of fire
Invested, burn and glow.

CHRISTIAN YEAR. *Fourth Sunday after Trinity.*

TO
THE AUTHOR OF THE ABOVE STANZAS
THE FOLLOWING PAGES
OF
WHICH THE DESIGN
HOW IMPERFECTLY SOEVER EXECUTED
IS
TO RECOMMEND THE STUDY OF HEATHEN ETHICS
IN THE
SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH
ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
UNDER
A GRATEFUL SENSE OF THE BENEFIT
WHICH HE HAS BEEN ENABLED TO CONFER
UPON THE PRESENT AGE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author thinks it necessary to state, that the following Remarks were written by him, with a view to publication, some time before the delivery, from the University Pulpit, of a Sermon, on the Connexion of Heathen Ethics with Divine Revelation and the Church System, by Mr. Woodgate, Fellow of St. John's College; and quite independently of any communication with that Gentleman.

The interest which Mr. Woodgate's Discourse has excited in the University is, to the Author's mind, a proof of the demand for some work of the kind suggested in the following pages; a demand which Mr. Woodgate has proved himself well able to satisfy.

The Author must remind those persons in the University, to whom many of the following remarks will sound like a "thrice told tale," that one of his objects in putting them forth is to convey, as far as he is able, to persons unacquainted, or deficiently acquainted, with Oxford, some information relative to our Ethical Studies.

Balliol College, March 3, 1837.

REMARKS,

&c.

Opposite views of Heathen Ethics.

Of Heathen Ethics, in connexion with Divine Revelation, two opposite views are entertained; both, it is conceived, erroneous.

By some, Revelation, as a practical system, is regarded as little more than a republication of Heathen morality.

By others, it is held to be altogether distinct from every other Moral System; insomuch, that to institute any comparison between it and the speculations of Heathen philosophers, except in the way of *contrast*, is deemed an injury to Divine Truth, and almost a profanation of it.

If the former of these views be right, whence, we may ask, arises the marvellous difference between the Gospel, and every moral system independent of it, in respect of *practical results?* For, all the systems together being professedly practical; all avowing as their aim the formation of a character in man answerable to the end of his existence; the excellence of each ought, in

reason, to be measured by its tendency to effect this object.

Now I am not aware that, even by those who think thus disparagingly of Revelation, or thus highly of the efforts of unaided Reason, it is commonly denied, that the Christian Character, not in its abstract beauty alone, but as it has again and again been realized in practice, is incomparably superior to that which the philosophers of antiquity, or any of their followers, are known to have exhibited; or, at all events, to that which, in any number of instances, resulted from their systems. If, however, this statement be denied by the impugners of Divine Revelation, we may appeal, without any doubt of the result, from their decision in the matter, to that of more impartial judges.

On the other hand, if it be true, that the morality of Revelation presents nothing but a series of contradictions to that of Heathen Systems, it would seem more than questionable, whether it be right to imbue, as in this University, the minds of Christian students with a large portion of Heathen Ethics, without, at least, taking care (as no one obviously does) to impress them with notions of the *falsity* of the systems, to the study of which they are expected to give up so much of their time.

The truth seems to lie between these extreme opinions. Revelation has authoritatively published what Heathen philosophers taught. And yet, as a system capable of realizing its designs, it stands entirely alone. It has filled up those gaps in the ancient systems, by reason of which, notwithstanding all their beauty, and even consistency, as *theories*, they were fundamentally, and, as things then were, irremediably, defective. We read, therefore, Heathen Ethics at Oxford, for the purpose, among others, of learning what mere Reason could do towards teaching man his Duty; and we read, or ought to read, them in connexion with Divine Revelation, that we may know wherein, precisely, our Rule of life transcends the theories of the wisest Heathens. Intermediate view the true one.

Yet is there no need to set the two systems in invidious contrast. Heathen philosophy is not wrong, but imperfect; and Revelation has not reversed, but corrected and completed, it. It is not more the characteristic *excellence* of Revelation in the comparison with Heathen Ethics, than its *coincidence* with them in certain remarkable instances, which speaks of its Divine origin. For, if the Gospel be not Inspired, what is it? A collection of the writings of simple-minded, and, for the most part, illiterate, men. Whence, then, this Practical Scheme, so perfect in its con-

sistency; so powerful in its efficacy; which, agreeing, in outline, with the best Heathen systems, has completed them just where they were obviously defective; and gone to form characters (a matter, be it observed, of experience) which, by the consent of all who are capable of deciding in such a case, have made the nearest approaches to Perfection? The analogy of the Divine proceedings would lead us to expect that Reason, the gift of God, sincerely exercised in investigating Moral Truth, would terminate in something better than unmixed error. But, if there be any, who are little satisfied with *à priori* reasoning upon such a subject, there is still, for their conviction, a vast reserve of proof, arising out of the facts of the case.

Design of the present Remarks.

To point out, in a few instances, the Agreement at once, and the Difference, between the Practical Scheme of Divine Revelation and the theories of some of those Heathen philosophers, with whose writings we are, in this University, familiar, is one object of the following remarks. Another, implied in the former, is, to vindicate against reproach, and to protect, as far as may be, from misrepresentation, the Theory and Practice of our Academical System; which, making, as it obviously does, a knowledge of Revealed Religion the first end of Education, and

that to which all else is to be not *subordinate* merely, but *subservient*; yet recognizes as most valuable, the study of various other subjects, and chiefly of the Aristotelian Philosophy, in reference to this primary and paramount end. And, forasmuch as the basis of our System is not Revelation merely, but that particular View of it, which our Reformers adopted from Catholic Antiquity, at the same time freeing the doctrine of the Church from the superincumbent weight of Popish additions, it would plainly be a benefit to shew, as shall be attempted, that the character of our Ethical, as of our other, studies in this place, falls in with the peculiar System and Designs of our Church. The more immediate object, however, of these pages, is to throw out, for the use of Students in the University, a few hints upon the study of the works of Heathen philosophers as a branch of Christian Education. Practically, I am inclined to think, Divinity and Heathen Ethics are studied by candidates for the First Degree too much as distinct subjects; the former often superficially, and with a view to the collection of a certain number of details, rather than in its scope and application as a Practical System; the latter, as an evidence of the opinions of certain individuals, rather than as a consistent Scheme, perpetually admitting of most

valuable illustration, from a Book of Inspired, and, therefore, Infallible, Disclosures upon the same subject. It is, doubtless, most desirable to make *all* our studies bear, as much as possible, upon Religion; but none so little admits of being kept apart from it, as Moral Philosophy. The bearing of History, for instance, or of Poetry, upon Religion, though, of course, real, is yet indirect. It may be better left, in these instances, to suggest itself at a future time. But the habit of viewing subjects of Moral Inquiry apart from Religion, must be more than negatively hurtful to the mind; except only upon the hypothesis, which regards them as entirely distinct questions. It is dangerous to acquire the habit of viewing subjects essentially Practical in the light of mere theories [a]. Such a habit tends to exhaust energies, and misuse impressions

[a] My Oxford readers will not need to be reminded of the following passage. "Going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures, of it; this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form an habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, *i. e.* form an habit of insensibility, to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker." Bp. Butler's Analogy, part i. c. 5.

given for a better purpose. It is like wasting sympathies upon unreal sorrows[b]. The subject of Ethics (Heathen or other, if every where the same) should be treated as serious, and even sacred. If not more or less practical, it is of no real use[c]. If practical in any degree, it sustains a species of profanation in being made a mere test of intellectual skill, and a mere way to Academical distinction. And what is true of all Ethics, is true, in an infinitely higher degree, of the Divine Ethics of the Gospel. While I would urge upon our students a more thoughtful mode of studying both Divinity and Heathen philosophy, I would most anxiously guard against seeming to represent the study of Divine Truth in the light of an intellectual exercise, or to recommend a philosophizing mode of viewing it. Nothing can be conceived more at variance with the spirit of this place than such a habit. We seek not here to philosophize Religion, but to sanctify Philosophy. We would illustrate the works of Heathen philosophers from Holy Scripture; not Holy Scripture from

[b] See Mr. Newman's Sermon on St. Luke's Day. (Sermons, Vol. II.)

[c] Οὐ γὰρ ἵν' εἰδῶμεν τί ἐστιν ἡ ἀρετὴ, σκεπτόμεθα, ἀλλ' ἵν' ἀγαθοὶ γενώμεθα· ἐπεὶ οὐδὲν ἂν ἦν ὄφελος αὐτῆς. Arist. Eth. lib. ii. c. 2.

them; except, only, in the way of *evidence*. But the experience of many will bear out the assertion, that, as things now are, the study of Divinity, obviously designed by the very condition of Matriculation to be distributed over the whole of the Undergraduate residence, is often practically delayed to the latest possible period[c]; and then limited to the acquisition of the

[c] I speak here of the frequent practice of Students themselves, not of the administration of the Academical System in the different Colleges. In that with which I happen to be best acquainted, provision is made for the study of (elementary) Divinity throughout the whole of the Undergraduate residence. Every Undergraduate of Balliol College is required to read, with his Tutor, three at least of the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the original language, with Dr. Paley's Horæ Paulinæ; the Articles of the Church of England with a Commentary; one of the standard Treatises on the Common Prayer, or some other work of authorized Divinity; besides analyzing the whole of the Old Testament History. By a special institution in the same College, he is likewise required to hear, and analyze, a written Course of Lectures on the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Commandments, Sacraments, and in fact every subject of elementary and practical Divinity, with which ordinary Christians need to be acquainted. I have good reason for believing, that similar opportunities are held out in other Colleges to students desirous of profiting by them.

supposed minimum of attainment; while, on the other hand, no pains are spared to gain a competent knowledge of the writings of Heathen philosophers. The result of this practice is, that when the (comparatively) worthless object of the Academical Honour has been gained, the student, unless led by professional occupations in the University to pursue the subject, speedily forgets what, if studied as a matter of practical, and therefore permanent, interest, might have been a blessing to him through life.

Granting, then, what none can reasonably doubt, that the design of Oxford in requiring from her students a competent knowledge of Divinity, is to make them not so much Theologians, as well-instructed Christians, it may well be questioned, whether such design be not, through a thankless neglect of present privileges on the part of her students, too often frustrated. Of those who give up so much of their time to the study of Heathen Philosophy, it is surely to be expected, that they shall bestow *at least* an equal regard upon that Revealed Truth, by the light of which alone they can judge either of the excellence, or the defects, of Heathen wisdom; and by the aid of which alone they learn, how Ethics may be made to pass from the character of an ingenious theory, into that of a Rule of life.

Superiority of the Evangelical to the Aristotelian Rule.

What means does the Gospel offer me for resisting such and such temptations? It bids me "watch and pray." What says Aristotle? He requires of his disciples to energize virtuously under the guidance of a Principle, which a course of Virtue alone can form within them; but he leaves them without any sufficient means of overcoming, in the mean time, their natural weakness, and the force of temptation. They must, then, energize to gain habits, while, without habituation, they cannot energize perfectly. Here then is a difficulty, which, although it is not more in the Aristotelian System than in the nature of things, is one whereof nothing but Divine Revelation can furnish an adequate solution. It is solved by the Doctrine, which bids us look *out of ourselves* at once for Direction and for Help. It is, in fact, a very correct *account of the matter;* and, with such supplement of Truth as the Christian is enabled to make to it, becomes a very sufficient Rule of duty. But we can conceive that, in itself, it would form but a feeble counterpoise to the force of temptation. Here, then, is a manifest superiority in the Christian System; its recognition of the necessity of recourse to supernatural Aid both for Direction and for Strength.

Again, we may conceive the possibility, in the Heathen disciple's mind, of another difficulty.

In my own lack of experience, (he may be supposed to say to his teacher,) you bid me have recourse to the experience of others[d]. The practical result of your whole argument is to prove the necessity of *Education*. Those who now educate, were themselves by others educated. Has this course of things gone on from all eternity? If not, by whom was *the first man* educated? This opens to us another difficulty in Heathen Systems; the want of an infallible *Authority*.

Now it is maintained, that this difficulty, like the last, arises from a deficiency, not an error, in Heathen philosophy. Might not the Christian teacher, as in the last case he would say, "*Act*, that you may *know*," (although, in another sense, you must *know*, in order to *act*,) so in this; "Take *upon trust* what cannot be proved to you by demonstration." Wherein, then, consists the difference between the two systems? Simply, that, under Revelation, there is *beyond*

[d] Τῶν καθ' ἕκαστά ἐστιν ἡ φρόνησις, ἃ γίνεται γνώριμα ἐξ ἐμπειρίας· νέος δ' ἔμπειρος οὐκ ἔστι· πλῆθος γὰρ χρόνου ποιήσει τὴν ἐμπειρίαν. Arist. Eth. l. vi. c. 8.

[e] Δεῖ προσέχειν τῶν ἐμπείρων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων ἢ φρονίμων ταῖς ἀναποδείκτοις φάσεσι καὶ δόξαις, οὐκ ἧττον τῶν ἀποδείξεων· διὰ γὰρ τὸ ἔχειν ἐκ τῆς ἐμπειρίας ὄμμα, ὁρῶσι τὰς ἀρχάς. Id. l. vi. c. 11.

all, an Infallible Rule; and *before all*, a Divine Monitor: *this*, anticipating and cooperating with every act of the responsible agent: *that*, removing all doubt as to the ground of obligation to right conduct.

Divinity how to be studied.

This instance will, it is hoped, sufficiently prove what is meant by recommending the study of Divinity in connexion with that of Heathen Ethics. It is something as far as possible removed from the study of Religion, as a system of *abstract doctrines*. It is, in fact, nothing more than the consideration, which every right-minded Christian, of an age to think at all, will bestow upon the most important of all the subjects upon which his intellect can possibly be employed. It is an experimental, rather than an intellectual, study of Religion, which is recommended; a study of its Power, and wonderful Adaptation to all the circumstances of every man's condition; a study, deep, calm, contemplative; of the Holy Scriptures themselves, not of compends and commentaries; pursued in the closet, as well as in the lecture-room; not controversial, and disputatious, and speculative; the theme of debate, the occasion of intellectual rivalry; but reserved[f],

[f] "*Leves* curæ loquuntur"—is an observation founded upon a deep knowledge of Human Nature. Read, upon this subject, those exquisitely beautiful lines in the

yet without moroseness; observant, without censoriousness; making chiefest use of privacy, to gain knowledge; of intercourse with loved and like-minded friends, to elucidate and strengthen it.

Temptations incident to the Academical system.

The less, in fact, Divinity is studied here with a view to examinations and Academical honours, the better. Such things may have their use with respect to this subject, as well as to others. But they were devised, it must be borne in mind, as all regulations intended for a large community of persons must be devised, according to *a low estimate of character*. Let those, who would be perfect, beware how they model themselves according to a standard necessarily, and most wisely, regulated by a regard to the wants of the *majority*. Human Nature, being what it is, especially

Christian Year for the Fourth Sunday in Lent. Nothing is more characteristic of true Religion, than the *shrinking* disposition, there so happily illustrated; nor any thing so apt to blunt the edge of religious sensibilities as the habit of baring them to the world. It is most unnatural too; for what right-minded person likes to hear the character of an intimate Friend, or any other subject nearest his heart, rudely and profanely dealt with by indifferent and unsympathizing people, or ever thinks of broaching such cherished subjects before them? And does Religion deserve a less tender treatment at our hands?

in youth, must be stimulated by inferior, yet legitimate, motives, and kept continually upon the alert. But Divinity is, of all subjects, that which least bears to be mixed up with any but the highest considerations. I cannot help being suspicious of the influence of such things as Theological Prizes and Scholarships. One sees, with respect to this particular subject, how necessary it is to keep a watch against the temptations of this place, in the prevalence of the habit, so dangerous at once and so infectious, of listening to University Sermons, and afterwards discussing them, as if they were mere Speeches, or Prize essays. The bias of a place of education (of Oxford, I verily believe, as little as any, yet still of Oxford in its degree like the rest) is, and must ever be, towards the undue exaltation of the intellect. Talents, as they are unthinkingly called, (would that they were oftener regarded as such, in the Scriptural meaning of the word!) are praised, and looked upon as things to make men proud. Academical honours are sought, not as means of good, (which they are,) but as ends, (which they are not,) and too often rested in, as such. To be sure, such mistakes are generally rectified, in the long run, even in this world; but some learn their error too late to correct it, and others die in it.

Let, then, the end of the study of Divinity ever be the amendment of the heart. If this be made the *object* of it, much else that is desirable in a subordinate degree will follow in the way of *result*. It is wonderfully provided, that there is no study which, when rightly conducted, has so great a tendency to develope the intellect, as Divinity; none, which so much tends to approximate, in every important respect, minds the most originally dissimilar in point of what are called, natural endowments. The powers of Intellect depend, in many more ways than we sometimes think, upon the Moral frame of our minds; and, over and above the *direct* blessing which all Religious exercises are sure to draw down upon every other pursuit, there is a way in which they benefit the mind less directly, and by what Bishop Butler calls, "natural consequence." With respect, especially, to Heathen philosophy, we acquire, through a deep and experimental acquaintance with Religion, what may be called *a new sense* to what was formerly obscure, and new powers of combining what before seemed to be unconnected. It is commonly remarked by the Public Examiners of the University, that none of the Candidates for Academical Honours master the difficulties of ancient philosophy so successfully, as those

Results of the study of Divinity when properly conducted.

who have thought deeply of Religious subjects[g].

Connexion between Ethical and Religious system of Oxford.

It has been said[h], that an intimate connexion subsists between the studies of Oxford, and the

[g] The only good method of arriving at correct, as well as comprehensive, views of ancient philosophy, is by accurate study of the works in which these views are unfolded. The present generation has at once a help, and a temptation, which our forefathers wanted, in the prevalence of Abstracts and Encyclopædias, and such like royal roads to knowledge. A help they doubtless are; but a temptation to indolence, or superficial reading, as well. The habit of close and accurate reading is so valuable in every way, that, if there were any use in comparing evils, it would not be difficult to prove contracted views far preferable to an impatience of research. There is, surely, however, a method of study, which keeps clear of both errors; combining the advantages of accuracy and attention to details, with those of original thought. The books themselves should give the materials of reflection; but they should be reflected upon at least as much as they are read. Under these restrictions, Encyclopædias, and whatever else concentrates details, and withdraws the mind from *books* to *subjects*, have their use. But they should come last, not first; and the Student should have recourse to them rather for the purpose of testing his own conclusions, than of ascertaining those of others.

[h] Subscription no Bondage:, published among the Oxford Pamphlets on Subscription to the XXXIX Articles, 1835.

Church system to which her members, as the very condition of their entrance at the University, are bound to submit. And this connexion has been exemplified by the author of the remark, more especially in the case of Moral Philosophy. It is somewhat of a confirmation of this view, that the devisers of new schemes of education generally declare war against Articles and Aristotle together. It is impossible, indeed, to help suspecting, that many of these persons confound the Moral Philosophy of Aristotle, which is the part of his writings best known at Oxford, with his *Logical System*, which is only studied here as a means to other ends; or with his *Physics*, a subject plainly depending altogether for its perfection upon progressive *discovery;* and that, having heard of the Scholastic philosophy in connexion with the Dark Ages, they, naturally enough, suppose, that Bigotry, as it is called, and the Aristotelian Philosophy, are, in some way or another, connected; and that Oxford adheres to Aristotle, in the same spirit, and with somewhat of the same design, with which she continues "to bind the talent and merit of this enlightened age with the fetters of the seventeenth century[1]."

[1] Lord John Russell's Letter to Lord Burlington, upon communicating to his Lordship His Majesty's

And yet, though there is, surely, no connexion of *this* kind between the Articles of the Church

intention of appointing him to the Chancellorship of the London University. Without applying to separate parts of this Letter the criticism to which it is open, let me only ask, with respect to the general tone of it, whether any thing can be more *undignified*, (to take no higher ground,) than to make the Official communication of a complimentary appointment to an Individual, the occasion of *insinuating* a political invective?

But in using this word "undignified," I am fearful of seeming to acquiesce in a low view; and I desire to protest against being understood to imply, that principles which I deem essentially wrong, can be rendered more tolerable by being disguised in specious language. One fears to stipulate for *mere tact* in times unhappily characterized by an excess of it. Maladroit zeal is, on many accounts, a less evil than discreet neutrality. One is glad in these days to discern proofs of strong feeling and sincerity *on any side*. For the temper of this age is to decry all downright measures as injudicious; all uncalculating feelings as enthusiastic. People are expected to cut down their principles to the level of Public Opinion; and it is thought a mark of *honesty* to bare to the world the fault of friends, or of the Church. O for a little less caution, and a little more enthusiasm; for somewhat of the chivalrous spirit of Burke, with more strictness, and a better understanding of the true character of the Church! the temper, not so much of Crusaders, as of Martyrs!

The best return which Oxford can make to those who malign and misrepresent her System, is to

of England, and the Philosophy of Aristotle; no bond of union, in respect of bigotry and superstition, between Articles framed *against Popery*, and an enlightened (although Heathen) system of Ethics; there may yet exist between the peculiar *character* of the Church of England, on the one hand, and the course of Ethical studies pursued

pray for them, and to hope that they may come to learn by a blessed (though it be also a bitter) experience, the wisdom of her course. Meanwhile, they must go their way, and she will keep to hers. The Church is her pole-star.

> Iste agitet cæcos error! vestigia nostra
> Tu, *Divina*, regas, certoque in tramite sistas.

Union with her enemies, or even any degree of approximation, is at present out of the question. Light and darkness are not more opposite than her system of education and theirs. But Oxford, *as a body*, honours God, and believes in the Atonement, and uses Prayer. The followers of the new way do these things only here and there; or (at best) but *as individuals*. Who shall assign limits to the efficacy of united Prayer ascending daily from a body like ours; and, together with all sound doctrine, and a perpetual recognition of the Most High, incorporated into our whole System? It may avail, like the prayers of Cornelius, even to "help a world undone." For, though the task of reclaiming the nominally Christian world be more arduous than that of awakening the Heathen, yet, on the other hand, we have "better promises" than the pious, but as yet unconverted, Centurion.

at Oxford, on the other, a coincidence sufficient to warrant an opposition to both together on the part of those, who do not wish well to our Church; although the true ground of such opposition may be ill understood by those who make it. Many will smile at the notion of attempting to establish a connexion between a certain course of Heathen philosophy and the particular ἦθος in matters affecting the Church and the constitution of Society, which the University of Oxford is known to favour. And yet, it is matter of experience, that a common temper, and a like tendency, may pervade views of subjects in themselves the most dissimilar; and, which is yet more paradoxical, views of the same subject, maintained by persons so differently, and, in many respects, oppositely, situated as Heathen and Christian philosophers. How else can we explain the unquestionable fact, that every page of the writings of such men as Bishop Butler and Hooker[k] admits of being illustrated by

[k] Mr. Keble, in his new edition of the works of Hooker, has set the original passages of Aristotle in juxta-position to those of Hooker, in which similar sentiments are expressed. The parallelisms between the Moral Philosophy of Bishop Butler and that of Aristotle might, of course, be easily pointed out. The coincidence between their views of the doctrine of

reference to the Moral and Political Philosophy of the ancients. Hooker, indeed, was evidently a profound Aristotelian; but our greatest of Ethical Divines, without distinctly recognizing the authority of Aristotle, exhibits much of unpremeditated sympathy with his temper, and undesigned coincidence with his views. On the other hand, between philosophers writing upon the same subjects in Christian times, there is often the most marked and irreconcileable difference of *System;* whence it plainly appears, that there are bonds of union between philosophers, other, and more intimate, than the accident of writing under a common Revelation, or even a common Protestantism.

Habits, of the nature of Temptation, and of man's consequent responsibility for it; and, above all, between their respective modes of treating the great question of Fatalism, are among the most familiar. The earlier part of the Ecclesiastical Polity of Hooker is to the Political views of Aristotle, what the Analogy and Sermons of Bishop Butler are to his Ethical; a Christian Commentary, shewing how these subjects may be vindicated from profane uses. Mr. Keble's Edition of the Ecclesiastical Polity, lately published, is of great value in this respect, and will, I trust, be the means of leading students to read the works of Hooker, as well as those of Bishop Butler, in connexion with the Aristotelian Philosophy.

Advantages of the study of *Heathen* Ethics.

There is, as it seems to me, though I am aware that, to some, the statement may seem paradoxical, a peculiar advantage in making the works of *Heathen* philosophers, the basis of our Ethical studies. Whatever in such works is found to *coincide* with Divine Revelation, is of the nature of an *independent* testimony to its *truth*. Whatever, again, in the speculations of the wisest Heathens, is found to be *defective* or *erroneous*, will be regarded, by the religious mind, as a proof of man's *need* of a Revelation, and thus be gratefully admitted as an evidence of its *value*. Moral philosophers, since Revelation, must write, either respectively, or irrespectively, of it. If the latter, they can hardly fail, however unintentionally, to do disservice to Religion; and if the former, they are of far less use, than Heathens, as witnesses to its truth. For the value of all Heathen *testimony* to Revelation is (of course) enhanced by that same want of light, which, on the other hand, accounts for, and excuses, Heathen *errors*. It is not to be supposed, that Oxford could ever be induced to substitute, for the Aristotelian philosophy, any book, or books, in which Ethics should be treated *irrespectively* of Divine Revelation; and, as a matter of fact, she does, under existing circumstances, adopt, in the way of a Commentary upon Aristotle's writings, the best of

those works, (the Analogy and Sermons of Bishop Butler,) in which Moral Philosophy is viewed in a religious light. So that, on the whole, it really seems impossible to conceive how the Oxford System, in this respect, could be amended.

Such then, I conceive, is the advantage to be derived from the study of Heathen Ethics in general. And, with respect to the particular character of the Moral Philosophy studied in Oxford, I feel satisfied, that, between the Aristotelian views of Ethics and Politics, and the peculiar temper which our Church best loves, and most encourages, there is a far greater congeniality and coincidence, than between either and that philosophy now so rife, which, both in Ethics and Politics, tests conduct far more by its tendencies and results, than by its conformity to certain high, unalterable, Principles; which, for the onward heroism of assured Virtue, the uncalculating martyr-spirit of the Gospel and the Reformation, would substitute the cold and shifting policy of Expediency; of a motive which has no higher origin, and no better warrant, than the calculations of a limited and a fallible Experience[1].

[1] "The Prudence, which Aristotle teaches, is no *calculation of consequences.* It is a practical philosophy of

Aristotelian views of Truth and Opinion.

Strikingly at variance, again, with many views of the present day, is that System of philosophy, which perpetually distinguishes between the Good, and the Apparent Good; between Opinion (what *seems*[m] to men) and Truth (what *is*). Plato was, of course, the philosopher who was led, in opposing the Sceptical philosophy of his time, to protest with most earnestness against the system which substitutes, for divine and eternal Truth, the fluctuating standard of Human Opinion. But Aristotle, although characteristically (*in contradistinction to Plato*) the philosopher of *experience*, never loses sight of the unchangeable nature of Truth, Moral as well as Intellectual. He admits, indeed, the general opinion of men as an *evidence*, but never bows to it as *a law*. It is always, with him, a *reason for inquiry;* it may amount even to a *ground of presumption;* but it is never more. It is characteristically the standard of *Rhetoric*, as contradistinguished from *Ethics;* i. e. of the philosophy of *shewy*, rather than *intrinsic*, Virtue. If, however, such consent can be proved not *general* only, but

the heart inseparably connected with the love of that conduct which it suggests, &c. Encyclopædia Brit. part xv. Art. "Aristotle's Philosophy."

[m] Δόξα.

universal[n], it amounts to a *testimony* of highest value. There is, again, the *judgment of the best men*. This becomes even *a standard* of Ethics; a kind of personification of abstract Moral Truth. For, what these men think (it must be remembered) is not right, *because they think it*, but rather they think it *because it is right*[o]. Aristotle has, in this instance, admirably distinguished between General Opinion, Universal Consent, Authority, and Truth, as beyond all. To us, who at once believe in the corruption of the human intellect, and of the human heart, and who enjoy the privilege of an Inspired guide, mere general Opinion becomes hardly so

[n] Ὃ πᾶσι δοκεῖ.

[o] Aristotle implies, rather than directly states, that he considers Truth to have an *objective* existence externally to the human mind. His dread of the extravagancies involved in Plato's notion of the Abstract Good, disinclines him to dwell upon the subject of Truth, excepting as personified by the wisest and best men; but his continual distinctions between Truth and Opinion, the Abstractedly and Apparently Good, are sufficient to shew, that he considers the Judgment of men, even of the best, as no more than the embodying, in practical and tangible shape, of that which has an original and intrinsic value. The best account, as far as I know, of the distinction between Objective and Subjective Truth, is to be found in the Tracts for the Times by Members of the University of Oxford. Vol. iii. No. 73. §. 1.

much as a ground of presumption. Yet we attribute much to the Argument from Universal Consent[p]. On the other hand, Truth and Authority are often coincident. Even Aristotle saw, that something more than mere Intellect is required towards Authority in practical subjects; and the doctrine of Spiritual Influence, not merely *inspiring* (in the strict sense of the term) "holy men of old," but promised to the Church, and accorded to the prayer of individuals, goes towards approximating, almost even to identity, Abstract and Embodied Truth.

Aristotelian views of Politics.

Politics, again, in the hands of Aristotle, appear as a far nobler subject than the temper of modern times has made of them. They could not, according to Aristotle's view of them, be considered unworthy the regard of religious men. By him Political subjects are treated as a branch of Morals. Aristotle never makes concession to man's need as the object of government and legislation, without entering his protest against such concession being regarded as a deviation from the high standard of Virtue, which he has fixed in the Ethics. Against that view of Politics which regards Wealth[q] as the highest object of government,

[p] See Hooker, Eccl. Pol. vol. i. p. 282. ed. Keble.

[q] τὸ ζῆν instead of τὸ εὖ ζῆν. Ar. Pol. l. i. Cf. St. Luke xii. 15.

he contends with an earnestness, which, if any thing under the sun, any heresy, whether in Politics or Religion, were new, might almost be regarded as prophetic. Since the Revolution of 1688, the essential principles of Politics have been so overlaid and obscured by the delusive[r] distinctions of mere *Party*, that their very existence is disputed. A kind of Political Scepticism has grown up; and the subject of Politics deprecated, because misunderstood, has fallen into the hands of men of the world, who seek to keep it to themselves.

In pleading, however, for the Aristotelian views of Politics against those of some modern philosophers, it is necessary to enter a strong and decided protest against parts of his work on Government; more especially those, in which he recognizes Slavery as grounded upon a distinction of Nature[s]; and seems to sanction as excusable, at least, if not justifiable, certain forcible counteractions to, what *we* should hold, the order of Divine Providence[t]. All that can be said is, that such things have been defended, *upon principle*,

[r] Delusive, I mean, so far as they are designed to mark off certain opposed principles.

[s] Pol. lib. i. c. 2.

[t] Lib. vii. c. 15. See Encycl. Brit. part xv. Art. "Aristotle's Philosophy."

in days of more Light than he enjoyed; while, with him, they are much more of the nature of contradictions to his theory, than of legitimate applications of it. It is only the practical scheme of the Gospel which is every where right and consistent with itself.

The following remarks do not profess to amount to any thing like a complete developement of these views. It is, in fact, essential to their very object, that they should stop short of completeness; in order that so they may leave opportunity, in case any should think them worthy of regard, to expand the view of which they offer a specimen, and to make use of the clew which it is their design to furnish. The subject is one which plainly admits of being pursued throughout the whole range of Heathen Ethics. But the object of the present publication will be attained, if it shall become the means of drawing, to what the author cannot but consider a very important view, the attention of those, who are much better fitted than himself, to follow it up.

The instances, by which the original statement has been illustrated, are chiefly drawn from the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle. It has been sought to maintain for that work the sort of prominence to which it is, on every account, enti-

tled, in the comparison with other writings of the same author, or with those of other Grecian philosophers; and which it actually receives in the judicious practice of the University of Oxford. But the principal Dialogues of Plato have here received a subordinate notice, as valuable commentaries upon the Aristotelian writings; and more especially as developing the peculiar System of their author. Some of them (the "Gorgias" and "Philebus," for example) throw great light upon the Ethics and Rhetoric of Aristotle; while the Political work of that philosopher refers directly to the opinions of his master as exhibited in the "Republic" and the "Laws." The more the philosophy of Plato is studied, the less will he appear to be that mere enthusiast, and poet among philosophers, which many think him. In the midst of a diffuseness of style, and a fancifulness of theory, strikingly at variance with the close argument, and practical good sense, of Aristotle, there is a depth of thought, a boldness of conception, an intensity of feeling, in some parts of the Platonic philosophy, which is more nearly Divine than any thing else uninspired. The works of Plato are, at the same time, peculiarly valuable, as exhibiting a contest of Principles eminently characteristic of the present age.

Uses of Divine Revelation with respect to Heathen Ethics.

The main object here proposed is to shew, that Divine Revelation has fallen in with every soundest view, solved every real difficulty, and met every noblest aspiration, of the wisest Heathens; and thus, while It throws lustre upon their speculations; approves, as natural, their perplexities; sanctions, as just, the results of their experience; It attests, at once, and remedies, the deficiency of their systems; furnishing Aids, and suggesting Motives, which are eminently and alone adequate to the regulation of conduct. Human Nature, its phenomena and tendencies and capabilities; Human Nature, the work, notwithstanding all its accidental deformities, all its superinduced irregularities, of God Himself[s], was the object present to the mind, whether of the Inspired or the uninspired Moralist. It was not, that they saw it with eyes of different structure, so that its images, erect, in the view of one, were, in that of the other, inverted[t]; but only, that the view of In-

[s] See Davison on Prophecy. (Discourse vii.)

[t] Neither, i. e. did the Heathens consider Human Nature other than imperfect; nor does the Gospel treat it as irremedially corrupt. I have lately read a work called "Christian Ethics" by Dr. Wardlaw, a Dissenting Minister, written with an excellent design, and in a very kind spirit. The author objects to all existing Theories of Ethics, on the ground of their overlooking

spiration was infinite, and its powers of vision perfect.

Contemplative and Active Life.

The Contemplative life of Plato, and the Active life of Aristotle, find their counterpart, and their perfection, in the Christian System. Both theories are right, each in its own way; and the Gospel, accordingly, has recognized and realized both. Only, it would unite in the same individual what the contracted notions of Heathens went to separate. Plato saw, that merely terrestrial things were unworthy of being the exclusive subject of human occupation, or the ultimate object of human pursuit. He placed, therefore, man's chief work in Contemplation; in the abstracted

the corruption of Human Nature. This is an important question. Aristotle's theory (which Dr. Wardlaw does not seem to have attentively studied) is, in itself, to my own mind, a strong argument against the ultra views of Human Corruption which Dr. Wardlaw holds: while his account of the *actual state* of man (see Ethics, b. vii.) sufficiently proves, that he was not insensible to the fact of man's waywardness. St. Paul's picture of the Unregenerate man (Rom. viii. 15. et seq.) is the true account of that conflict (στάσις) of Principles, of which Aristotle speaks in the Ninth Book of the Ethics. But such description does not (I humbly conceive) apply, in all its force, to Regenerated Nature.

exercise of the only good part of his Nature; in intercourse with the Divinity, whereof that better part is a ray or an offshoot; in perpetual anticipation of that reunion with the Alone Good, the prospect whereof, while

Confined and pestered in this pin-fold here[t],

is man's only solace, and best motive to purity. Aristotle, on the other hand, had too much good sense not to see, that man had a business here on earth other than Contemplation; while yet he had a misgiving, that his only business was not here[u]. He treated, therefore, the other's Immortality as a beautiful theory; forgetting that, if real, (which he did not go so far as to deny,) it was *every thing*. The other, meanwhile, the thought of man's higher destinies ever in his mind, saw not that the way to them must be won through homely duties; knew not that the Body, as well as the Soul, is of Divine Creation; and that God, or (as Aristotle said) Nature[x], does nothing in vain.

What says the Gospel upon this subject? It abounds with provisions for our Compound Na-

[t] Milton's Comus.

[u] See, especially, the end of the Tenth Book of Ethics. χρὴ, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται, ἀπαθανατίζειν.

[x] Οὐδὲν ἀργὸν πέφυκεν, &c.

ture, (the *σύνθετον*[y] of Aristotle,) but with a constant eye to that Future State, which he lost sight of, at all events as a *motive*, and which Plato reduced to a mere abstraction. What are such precepts as "Pray always;" (be) "not slothful in business, but (be) fervent in spirit;" and others, but recognitions of the theories of both philosophers; indications of a system, which concentrates the wisdom of all, without being beholden to any; which meets *all* the wants, and answers *all* the ends, of our Moral nature, instead of a part only; besides (of course) the power of alone realizing what It contemplates?

Look, again, at Its estimate of *the Body;* by one Heathen Philosopher disdained as an encumbrance[z]; by another unduly exalted[a]; by a third, with more truth, regarded as not insignificant, though any thing but supreme[b]; as contributing to make up the *whole* of man's nature; though still without respect to Eternity. In the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body,

Heathen estimate of the Body, as compared with Evangelical.

[y] Eth. lib. x. c. 8.

[z] Plato, Phædon.

[a] As in the views of Pleasure, &c. which Plato resists.

[b] Aristotle, mediating between Plato and Eudoxus, in the Tenth Book of the Ethics.

Christianity has just completed the Heathen theory of the Immortality of the Soul, where it was defective; substantiating the visionary; defining the indefinite; substituting for the vague and negative idea of Immortality, the good Hope of rising and living again, with present feelings heightened and purified; with present capacities enlarged; in a definite place, and with a provision for the perpetuation of the best earthly sympathies. And, as a necessary result of this doctrine, It dignifies and ennobles what Sight without Faith has a tendency to make us regard as vile and base. Who does not see in the Doctrine of the (essential) Identity of the Body raised with the Body buried, and, above all, in the practical result of that Doctrine, (the injunction to honour bodies so sanctified and destined[c],) the verification of all Plato's imaginings, the justification of all Aristotle's experience? a provision for the "Compound Nature" of the one Philosopher, not irrespective of the other's dissatisfaction with the world, and longing after Immortality?

Platonic and Aristotelian views of Experience.

The moral Systems of Plato and Aristotle differ, in that the former wholly excludes, while

[c] 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. vi. 19, 20, &c.

the latter partially admits, Experience as a guide to Truth. A System grounded on Experience[d], is by Plato contradistinguished from one of fixed Principles, to which it bears the relation which Flattery bears to Friendship[e]; that, namely, of a *counterfeit*. It belongs to the fluctuating and unstable parts of our nature[f]. Of this kind, according to him, is the (so called) Art of Rhetoric, which is, in reality, nothing but gilded Sophistry. To *persuade* a man, is, in Plato's estimate of things, to *mislead* him. Whatever is deduced from certain unerring and immutable Principles, and admits of being tried according to the standard of Truth which the Divinity has impressed upon our minds, is right. Whatever involves Induction, i. e. makes man the author of Truth to himself, rather than the Divinity the author of Truth to him, is wrong. For thus knowledge is derived to us through a corrupt medium, and is consequently uncertain. Every System, therefore, according to Plato, which is grounded upon Experience alone, is mere Empiricism. Now by Empiricism *we* should mean, (and so would Aristotle,) a system

[d] Ἐμπειρία τις, as contradistinguished from τέχνη. See Gorgias.

[e] Κολαχεία.

[f] See especially the Philebus and Theætetus.

based, not upon Experience, (for that Medicine is,) but upon *insufficient* Experience.

In all this (plainly extravagant) reasoning, we witness the spectacle of a great Mind, driven into an absurd extreme by its dread of that System, which makes the gratification of our sensual nature, in some form or other, the end of existence; and assigns too much weight to Human Experience as a guide to Truth. Plato was, in fact, so jealous of the intrusion of Experience into the province of Ethics, that he refused to admit it into inquiries of which it is manifestly the very basis.

Comparison between the Platonic, and some modern systems of philosophy.

While, however, he differs from much of the popular philosophy of the present, as well as of his own, time, in placing Moral Truth upon a sure and unerring foundation; he yet agrees with many theorists of later times in his undue exaltation of human Intellect. Conscience with him is a purely intellectual Principle. Like some modern philosophers, but unlike Aristotle and Bishop Butler, he regards the Feelings as hindrances to the perception of Truth. The influence of the *heart* upon the *head* which Aristotle (as well as the Gospel[5]) admits, he, like many in modern times, would discard as a *prejudice*.

[5] St. John vii. 17.

And yet, the office which he assigns to the Intellect of man, is very different from that which, according to some modern systems, it is expected to perform. The work of the Intellect, according to Plato, is *Contemplation of the Good;* that marked out for it in later times, is *Calculation of the consequences of actions.* Both systems tend to a sort of Apathy; but the apathy of the one is that of hermits; of the other that of cold, speculative, politicians. But the fact is, that against all attempts to counteract unduly the influence of the Affections, our Divinely-constituted Nature remonstrates and rebels; and not unfrequently softens the advocates of these Intellectual theories into kindlier beings, than their own systems, if realized, would make of them.

The spirit opposed at once to the Sceptical, and to the exclusively Intellectual, theory under both its forms, is that which, if exercised upon an unworthy object, we should call Chivalry; and upon a good object, Devotedness. It is the spirit which hazards a great deal for what it loves. It rather feels, than knows, and rather knows, than can make intelligible, the ground of its confidence The Sceptics of Plato's time could never have been Martyrs; because they never felt so sure of any thing in the world

as to make them think it worth a risk. And had even the Platonist been able to realize his purely Intellectual theory, he would have wanted that impulse of Feeling, which can alone inspire, or sustain, active Courage. On the other hand, the Courageous man of Aristotle's system, though his reason tell him that the result can be nothing but his own destruction, confident in the justice of his cause, goes forth to meet the danger, because his *heart* is enlisted on the side of Virtue[h].

These indications of a system, which assigns to Feeling its proper place according to the constitution of our nature, are the more remarkable in the writings of a philosopher, the prominent feature of whose views is *practical good sense*. But, as Mr. Burke has so well shewn in his work on the French Revolution, the cold, hard, way of viewing things which some adopt, though it makes great shew of Reason, is really irrational, because unnatural.

Aristotelian views of Friendship.

No one, surely, who was insensible to the value, in Ethics, of a provision for the uncalculating impulses of Affection, would have devoted a fifth part of his whole work to the consideration of Friendship. The concentration upon a few, of

[h] Eth. lib. iii. 6.

affections seemingly applicable to many, is a principle which is reasonable only, because natural. We know how, both in ancient and modern times, it has been attempted to shew, that such concentration of feeling is injurious to a larger Benevolence. Aristotle, however, saw, and rightly, that any thing like an equal diffusion of sympathy is impossible, and, if possible, would be undesirable; that *Partiality*, in the true sense of the word, is the essence of Friendship, and what is called *Candour*, its bane; and that Friendship, thus in a certain sense *exclusive;* little inclined to see, and still less so to proclaim, the faults of those in whom it has learned to confide, is no hindrance to a general Benevolence, but rather a way of promoting it[g].

But Aristotle saw likewise, that Friendships like this are necessarily rare. "To be the Friend of many upon the principles of True Friendship is impossible; for this Friendship, like Love, is of the nature of an extreme. And, as such, it can hardly exist with reference to more than one[h]."

[g] Mr. Newman's Sermon on St. John the Evangelist's Day.

[h] Πολλοῖς δ' εἶναι φίλον, κατὰ τὴν τελείαν φιλίαν οὐκ ἐνδέχεται· ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἐρᾶν πολλῶν ἅμα· ἔοικε γὰρ ὑπερβολῇ· τὸ τοιοῦτο δὲ πρὸς ἕνα πέφυκε γίνεσθαι. Eth. lib. viii. c. 6.

Of a Friendship such as this, Aristotle saw full well that Sympathy in Virtue is the only basis. And if for 'Virtue,' we substitute 'Religion,' we may take the Aristotelian, as a perfect account of Christian Friendship.

Ethical system of Aristotle nearest the Evangelical.

It is hardly necessary to observe, that, excepting for its omission of the one paramount subject of a Future State, the Ethical Philosophy of Aristotle would be that, which we should select as most in harmony with the Moral System of the Gospel; as exhibiting the rough draught, and faint outline, which the Gospel has filled up; thus, at once, attesting its correctness as the result of observation and experience, and its worthlessness in the character *which it professes* of a *Practical System*. *Given*, the first Impulse, (Baptismal Regeneration;) the right Principle, ("Faith working by Love;") the Rule, (Infallible Scripture;) the Moral System of the Ethics is *perfect*. To want these, is to want all; except, what Aristotle abundantly possessed, sagacity all but inspired. What a wonderful effort of human wisdom is the Ethical System of Aristotle! which, *regarded as a mere theory*, Revelation has only expressed in other words. How far more wonderful, how absolutely inexplicable, but upon the hypothesis of Inspiration, that

Divine Philosophy, which, bearing its independent testimony to the acuteness of the Heathen's observation, and the correctness of his experience, has perfected his view in the particular instances in which it was plainly defective; supplied the key-stone of the arch, which binds all together; and without which all the rest, however fair in appearance, and curiously wrought, must sink to the ground.

Views of man's Moral nature.

The agreement between the Gospel and the Aristotelian System is in this; that both represent man's Moral nature as capable of advancing indefinitely towards its perfection. The Platonists, like many in modern times, are advocates of the unlimited corruption of all which belongs to us, *as men*. Death, according to this view, becomes the barrier between two different, and, in most respects, opposite, states; the state of undiminishing self-denial, and unmitigated corruption, and indissoluble restraint, on the one hand, and that of perfect holiness, and freedom from corruption, on the other. By the Apostles, on the contrary, Death seems to have been regarded rather in the light of an incident (however momentous) in a long life; a life begun in Regeneration, and stretching into eternity. Aristotle, in like manner, seems to imply an opinion, that, *if time were given*, Human Nature would be capable of infinite

advancement. He regarded the present state of being, in its adaptation to man's Moral nature, consisting of intellect and affections, as full of opportunities to be improved with a view to this end. What better can we say of the Christian Life, than that it consists of a series of acts done upon principle; and in the belief of truths at first taken upon trust, but afterwards growing into our (renewed) Nature; the acts which had before gone to form the habit, now springing from it; and being performed with less and less of reluctance, in proportion as our duty becomes our delight? The difference, the all-important difference, is, that the Inspired Moralist, illuminated by Divine Wisdom, let, if I may so say, into the secret of the matter, and looking to "things not seen," ascribes to the Mighty Operation of GOD, what the human philosopher claims for man; speaks of *influences*, instead of *acts*, and designates as *growth in Grace*, what the other calls *only*, (for such, looking merely to *one* side of the question, it is,) the *progress of Habit*.

Course of moral degradation.

On the other hand, call the *downward course of vicious habit*, the *gradual withdrawing of the Holy Spirit*; the *distempered imagination*[h], sin's *deceitfulness*; the voluntarily-induced *ignorance*[i],

[h] φαντασία. [i] ἄγνοια.

judicial blindness; and how could a Christian better describe the progress and effects of sin, than by representing it as a slow, but certain, depravation of the moral principle; passing through the stage of self-accusing Incontinence into that of hardened Vice; in which the Holy Spirit, too long resisted, ceases to speak through the Conscience? Or what (again) are the pleas of the sinner, but some form of *Compulsion*[k] or *Ignorance*[l]? the former term applying to all alleged grounds of irresponsibility from without, the latter to those from within? And how may the preacher more Scripturally and more conclusively argue against the popular fallacy by which men, ready enough to take credit for their *good* actions, are continually seeking to escape from the responsibility of sin[m], than by tracing the effects of outward temptation to some permitted internal *aptitude*[n], by which its solicitations are too readily met; or by shewing men that the *ignorance* which they are apt to plead in extenuation of sin, is *of their own choosing?*

[k] βία.

[l] ἄγνοια.

[m] Eth. l. iii. 5.

[n] Eth. l. iii. c. 1. Γελοῖον δὴ τὸ αἰτιᾶσθαι τὰ ἐκτὸς, ἀλλὰ μὴ αὑτὸν, εὐθήρατον ὄντα ὑπὸ τῶν τοιούτων, καὶ τῶν μὲν καλῶν ἑαυτὸν, τῶν δὲ αἰσχρῶν τὰ ἡδέα. See Bishop Butler's Analogy, part i. c. 4.

Virtue in what sense a mean.

When Aristotle pronounces that Virtue is a Mean Quality, he seems to intend something nearer the truth than those who refer it to the standard of *Moderation*. For he calls it a quality partaking at once of the nature of a Mean and of an Extreme [o]. An extreme it is, not an excess, or a deficiency. It hits, that is, the *right point* [p], which is *one*, while mistake is infinite, and error multiform [q]. In this proper mean Virtue *results*, while the *object* which it proposes to itself is nobler than mere *Moderation*. The truly fair and good [r] is, according to Aristotle, the motive, or end, of Virtue; but, when successful, and conformable to this standard, it turns out (as we say) to be a Mean Quality: to have something, that is, on different sides of it, in the same subject-matter, which is wrong, while *it* is right. Aristotle seems, by his qualifications and exceptions, desirous of guarding against the mistake of supposing Virtue to be, in any way, a *Mediocrity* [s].

[o] Κατὰ μὲν τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸν λόγον τὸν τί ἦν εἶναι λέγοντα, μεσότης ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετή· κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἄριστον καὶ τὸ εὖ, ἀκρότης. Eth. l. ii. c. 6.

[p] Κύκλου τὸ μέσον οὐ παντὸς ἀλλὰ τοῦ εἰδότος. Eth. l. ii. c. 9. Aristotle uses ὡς δεῖ as explanatory of μέσως.

[q] Ἐσθλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἁπλῶς, παντοδαπῶς δὲ κακοί. Eth. l. ii. c. 6.

[r] Τὸ καλόν.

[s] "Right conduct, according to Aristotle, is not such

The difference between this view and that which makes Moderation the end of action, is just the difference between making the quest of good, or the avoidance of evil [*], the first object of life. The one course leads, at best, to the formation of a negative sort of character; the other to that of a perfect one.

The Church in what sense a Via Media.

The case of the Reformed Catholic Church affords a good illustration of my meaning. The object of our Reformers, as a body, was not so much to steer clear of extremes, as to pursue Truth. They did not set to work with a salutary fear of opposite errors, but pursued their object boldly; veering round (if they saw need) from one (so called) extreme to the other; sedulous of Truth, but reckless of Opinion; to men, seeming alternately, or relatively to their own standard, Papists, or Ultra Protestants; and yet, the while, instruments, in God's hands, for the production of the Reformed Catholic System; the precise exemplification of Aristotle's "Mean Excellence." For, of course, when the Church is called a "Via Media," reference is made not to

because it is neither excessive nor defective; but rather, it is neither excessive nor defective, *because it is right.*" Encycl. Brit. Art. "*Aristotle's Philosophy.*"

[*] Between acting (as Aristotle says) ὅτι καλὸν, and φεύγων κακόν.

her *doctrines* only, but to her *spirit*, and practical system. The Church *temper*, is a *point* standing in contrast with every thing which is wrong in the same subject-matter; with the (so-called) *extremes* of Popery and Rationalism and Puritanism. It is (in the language of Aristotle) a Mean between servile Submission, and proud Independence; or between unreasoning Belief, and unbelieving Reason; or, lastly, between Apathy and Excitement. And yet it is much liker to an Extreme, than any of the so-called extreme systems; i. e. it much better *represents the principle*, and *realizes the professed object*, of each. It better (i. e.) secures *true* Obedience, than Popery; *true* Independence, than Ultra Protestantism; the *right* use of human Reason, than the Rationalistic system; the *reality* and *depth* of Feeling, than the Enthusiastic. On the other hand, many of these apparent extremes really approximate, not in doctrine only, but in temper: e. g. the Popish and the Puritanical; and, again, the Rationalistic and the Enthusiastic [a].

[a] The agreement between Rationalism and Enthusiasm in their exaltation of the mind of man, the former by the deification of Reason, the latter, of the Feelings, and the common opposition exhibited in this their coincidence of principle to the Catholic temper, is intimated in a Tract, entitled, "The Catholic

Hence it appears, that *they* are not the *real* extremes, but that within all of them there lie,

and Rationalistic Spirit compared," to which reference has already been made. (Vide supra, p. 33.)

On the other hand, the Pharisaical character of the New Testament seems to exhibit many points of similarity to the worst forms at once of the Popish and Puritanical temper. The same subject is strikingly illustrated in the following passage.

" The Presbyterian system was, in its original principles, as sternly and avowedly intolerant as the Pontifical chair. It extended no hope of salvation, beyond the pale of its own communion. It affected a dominion, paramount to all earthly magistracy. It proclaimed a war of extermination against heresy. It was ready to compass earth and sea for proselytes. Violence and terror were employed to establish its claim to infallibility. And if Popery had its Council of Trent, Calvinism has its Synod of Dort. If it abjured the idolatry of the mass, it may fairly be said to have found a substitute in the ordinance of preaching: for to the Presbyterian, the Sermon was almost as much the life and soul of public worship, as the sacrifice of the Eucharist was to the Romanist. If it renounced altogether the *merit* of ritual performances, it seemed to indemnify itself, by setting up, instead, the *merit* of neglecting them. If the Pope claimed power to hurl monarchs from their thrones, the Presbytery, in like manner, held itself commissioned to denounce them as traitors to the majesty of the people, and enemies to God. If the Pope could proclaim, that to keep faith with heretics, was to be false to the Church, the Pres-

concealed by delusive names, two opposite sets of principles, those of the Church of England, that is, and those essentially opposed to it. And thus, the true Church, although a Via Media, or Mean System, in the sense of a Right point, or True centre, among erratic and eccentric bodies continually wandering over the expanse of Inquiry, "seeking rest and finding none," is yet not such in the sense of a Mediocrity, or Moderation, which has no higher object than to steer clear of seeming excesses and deficiencies; paring down principles really opposed, and blending together different systems, that it may enable them to meet in a new system, thought intermediate between vicious extremes, and such as to combine the excellence of all, without the faults of any; but which is, in reality, a mass of compromise and inconsistency; colourless, though made up of many colours. Only compare with the "reserves" and "qualifications" and "modifications," to which the framers of this

bytery could declare, precisely in the same spirit, that oaths were nullities, whenever they tended to the detriment of the holy cause." Life of Archbishop Laud, by the Rev. C. W. Le Bas.

From all this it appears, that the strong hold against error, of whatever kind, is to be found in true Church principles.

system are obliged continually to have recourse, the kind of hardihood in paradox (if I may so express myself) in which Holy Scripture delights[x]. Statements, the most seemingly incompatible, It throws out with a recklessness of consequences, an indifference to the chance of misrepresentation, which are strikingly characteristic of the unsuspecting confidence of Truth. The framers of Articles of Faith (which are essentially *remedial*) cannot be expected to preserve this character so entirely, as those who wrote out of sight (as I may say) of heresy. But still it is a character which eminently pervades the Formularies of our Church, when viewed in their combination.

Courage.

Aristotle's account of Virtue in its details is very beautiful, and proves, I think, that Dr. Paley has understated the Heathen side of the argument, in his comparison of the "heroic" with the "patient" virtues[y]. It is true, that Aristotle gives a great prominence in his system to the Virtue of Courage. But Courage, as he represents it, is a perfectly Christian quality.

[x] This peculiarity in the Scriptural teaching has been more than once remarked by Archbishop Whately in his published works.

[y] Evidences, vol. ii. c. 2.

It is nothing else than the habit of mind which leads us, on proper occasions, to "quit ourselves like men[z]." It is a frame of mind, of which Warlike Courage is only a single form, an accidental result. It is a fearlessness (not an apathy) about our duty, *whatever it may be*. About the precise nature of that duty, Christians and Heathens would, of course, disagree; but there is no need, therefore, that they should disagree about the habit of mind, which leads to such a result. What is the true καλὸν, is the question between them. There is no need to contrast Heroism with Patience; as if the latter were essentially a Christian, and the former essentially an unchristian, quality. The spirit of the Martyr includes both. The Martyr by Courage entitles himself to the privilege of suffering, and therein to the need of Patience[a]. Neither is it strictly true, that the quality of Christian Patience was ill understood by the Heathens. The "Meekness" of Aristotle and of the Gospel are essentially the same[b].

[z] Ἀνδρεία.

[a] So likewise Aristotle's ἀνδρεῖος is said by him, κατ' ἀξίαν καὶ πάσχειν καὶ πράττειν. Eth. l. iii. c. 7.

[b] It may be questioned, whether the "*results*" of mere Patience have been, as Dr. Paley considers, far more conducive to true happiness, than those of (the

The virtue of the Aristotelian Ethics, which seems, at first sight, the least reconcileable with Christian Perfection, is that of Magnanimity. Aristotle's definition of this Virtue[c] *sounds* very unchristian, and his account of some of its results is doubtless so. As far, however, as the definition is concerned, we shall find that the disagreement between Aristotle and the Christian, would turn chiefly upon the ground and origin of *worthiness*. The appeal to a sense of

Magnanimity.

Aristotelian) Courage. But this, after all, is an inquiry to which, with our present knowledge, we are quite unequal. The mere doubtfulness of the fact, however, is a strong argument against Dr. Paley's rule of Expediency. The moment (as it seems to me) we bring in our *experience* to help us in determining the nature or ascertaining the causes of human happiness, we are involved in inextricable difficulty and uncertainty. All we know is, that a certain line of duty plainly marked out by the Spirit of God, speaking through Holy Scripture, the Church, and our own Consciences, *must* lead to happiness, how circuitously soever, and in spite of whatsoever apparent hindrances. The rest is all conjecture, most perplexing and unpractical. To overcome the temptation to test actions by their seeming *results*, is of course the triumph of Faith over Sight. According to Aristotle, actions are to be done because they are right, without looking to results; τῷ ἀνδρείῳ ἡ ἀνδρεία καλόν. &c. (Vid. inf. p. 66.)

[c] The Magnanimous person is one who, being worthy of great things, thinks himself so.

(Christian) dignity is not uncommon with the Inspired Moralists of the New Testament[d]. There is also (of course) a *lower* sense of the word "dignity," according to which that quality is strictly compatible with Christian excellence, even if not directly connected with it. It is not right to consider the grace of Christian Humility as opposed to a (certain) sense of dignity. Humility does not consist in blinding ourselves to our abilities, (spiritual or natural,) to our station in society, &c. (for that were folly, or affectation,) but in referring them to their proper Source, and regarding them as given to us for certain great purposes. A sense of what *becomes* all of us as Christians, and many of us as those who are gifted with certain special means of influence, is true Magnanimity; which is not only consistent with true Humility, but even involves it. Something of this kind was, doubtless, in the mind of Aristotle when he specified Maganimity among moral virtues; but, knowing little of the real grounds of Dignity, he has given a very imperfect account of the quality, which he intended to depict.

His description, indeed, of this Virtue is a very remarkable instance of Heathen right-mindedness struggling against Heathen disadvantages.

[d] Eph. iv. 1. 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. &c.

Under the Christian system, a certain grateful consciousness of Moral superiority, is perfectly compatible both with Humility and with Charity. It becomes wrong only when (as in the case of the Pharisee in the parable) it involves a *contemptuous* estimate of others. *Comparison* with the state of others, or with his own former state, the improved and improving Christian cannot but make; and yet his frame of mind may be, at the same time, deeply humble, and tenderly compassionate. By the word Καταφρόνησις, Aristotle need not be understood to mean more than that dignified and independent disregard of common opinion, (of *opinion*, not of *individuals*,) which is eminently characteristic of the confidence of Truth and Rectitude. One who knows himself to be in the right, will (as Aristotle says) unite manly straightforwardness with prudent reserve[e]. He has no self-distrust; wherefore he does not hang upon the opinion of the multitude, but on all needful occasions will speak openly and without fear. And yet, distrustful of the sympathy of inferior minds, he is not prodigal of words, and ostentatious of feelings; ever dreading to profane what he cannot hope to make generally intelligible. Such, at least, is Christian High-

[e] Ἀληθευτικὸς, πλὴν ὅσα μὴ δι' εἰρωνείαν· εἴρωνα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς πολλούς. Eth. l. iv. c. 3.

mindedness; with the account of which I leave others to compare the details of the Aristotelian Magnanimity; not doubting that with something which is wrong, and more which is questionable, in that picture, they will find a striking intermixture of most unusual truth.

True and false Humility.

A great deal might be said, if this were the fit occasion for it, upon the difference between true and false Humility, which by many persons, especially in the present day, is but ill understood. There are, for instance, a great many views of Religion in the world, of a character peculiarly fitted to depress Christian exertion[f]; and these proceed chiefly from mistaken notions of Christian Humility, which is thought to consist, not in referring our (spiritual) abilities to God, but in undervaluing them. The true view of the subject is that which is contained in the verse, "I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me." There are three qualities of its notions whereof the world has much need to be disabused. They are these; Christian Humility; Christian Charity; Christian Moderation. With reference to all three,

[f] Ἡ τοιαύτη δὲ δόξα (Moral Pusillanimity) δοκεῖ καὶ χείρους ποιεῖν· ἕκαστοι γὰρ ἐφίενται τῶν κατ' ἀξίαν· ἀφίστανται δ' τῶν πράξεων τῶν καλῶν, ὡς ἀνάξιοι ὄντες. Eth. l. iv. c. 8.

let it be observed, that no faults are so likely to gain currency, as those which bear the semblance of virtues. For he who defends such, always acts under an advantage; and he who attacks them, under suspicion. They are excellent subjects of declamation; and at least nine-tenths of the world are the slaves of Rhetoric.

Truth, or Singleness of character.

Connected with this subject, is Aristotle's virtue of "Truth;" by which is to be understood that section of the larger quality which regulates our disposition and behaviour in society. It is the maintenance of our true characters, in our intercourse with the world; a Mean between Vaunting, and affected Self-depreciation. These extreme qualities agree with one another, and disagree with the Mean, in aiming (both of them) at *effect*. They differ from each other, in that the one is the vulgar, and the other the refined, method of attaining the common object. Both the extremes are apt to defeat their own end; but the extreme, in the way of defect, is generally the more successful of the two, as it is likewise the more artful. Few virtues are more difficult to practise than Aristotle's "Truth." Mixed society spins a web around our judgments which wonderfully impedes their freedom, and tends to conceal our real characters from others. It puts us continually in the way of acting a part,

of which bad habit one of the worst effects is, that it tends to deceive not only others, but ourselves[g].

Aristotle saw the necessity of tempering his virtue of Truth in our dealings with the world by another which he has called Friendliness[h]; a Mean between Flattery and Moroseness. This friendly feeling and truth together form a character which, with the rectification of the motive, and the object, would answer to St. Paul's description, "speaking the truth in love."

Practical Intellect.

Aristotle, like the best Christian Moralists, considers that there is an essential connexion between the Intellectual and Moral character; that the practical Intellect and the virtuous Affection grow up together, and jointly contribute to form the character of the Good man. His highest virtue of the Moral character is likewise of an Intellectual nature. It is the Intellect in its right application to practical subjects[i]. Aristotle, therefore, takes a correct mean between those who unduly exalt the Intellectual part of our nature, and those who needlessly and irreligiously underrate it. For, what says the

[g] See Mr. Newman's Sermon on Hypocrisy. (Vol. I. Serm. X.)

[h] Φιλία.

[i] Φρόνησις.

Gospel? "Be ye *wise* as serpents, and harmless as doves[k]." And again, "In malice be ye children; however, in understanding, be men[l]." And one of the parables of our LORD[m] is directly intended to shew the value of Prudence, or practical Wisdom; the Wisdom which makes good choice of means with a view to the proposed end. And this is precisely the "Practical Wisdom" of Aristotle.

Christian Simplicity and Prudence not incompatible.

Now there are many, who speak as if the *Simplicity* which the Gospel enjoins were a kind of *Imprudence*. So far from this being the case, the Gospel goes much nearer towards representing the want of Prudence, and Discrimination, and such like *practically intellectual* qualities, in the light of a *moral* defect; not, of course, a very serious one, but something which takes away from the *perfection* of the Christian character. So far as these practically intellectual qualities are natural, the want of them is, of course, no fault; but they are, to a much greater degree than pure Intellect, capable of being improved by habit. Opposite to the view which makes Christian Simplicity and Prudence incompatible, is the Jesuitical principle of sacrificing the means to the end. The

[k] St. Matt. x. 16. [l] 1 Cor. xiv. 20. [m] St. Luke xvi. 1. Cf. St. Matt. xxv. 2.

Scriptural warrant by which Jesuits, and those who adopt Jesuitical maxims of conduct, seek to justify themselves, is the text above quoted, "Be ye wise as serpents," &c. But they err, of course, not merely in taking it as an isolated text; but in looking to the one half of the passage, which makes for them, rather than to the other half, which makes against them. Accordingly, they "do evil that good may come;" as if good, real good, could ever come (excepting only as GOD is said to turn even wickedness to good) out of evil*!

* It is curious to observe how indulgently Dr. Paley speaks of the Jesuitical Rule. "From the principles," he says, (M. P. c. viii.) "delivered in this and the two preceding chapters, a Maxim may be explained which is in every man's mouth, and in most men's, without meaning; viz. not to do evil that good may come: i. e. let us not violate a general rule for the sake of any particular good consequence we may expect. Which is *for the most part* a salutary caution, the advantage seldom (!) compensating for the violation of the rule." So then, according to this system, Rules are to be founded upon a general expediency, which may afterwards bend to a particular one. They are neither sure in their foundation, nor uniform in their application.

Are there, then, it will be asked, no such things as actions *indifferent* in themselves, and to be judged accordingly by respect to their *tendencies?* This, surely, need not be denied, while we protest against the un-

These persons lose sight of the Aristotelian prin-

warrantable extension of such, which Dr. Paley's system admits. But this I do believe; that actions of this purely indifferent character are infinitely fewer than is generally supposed. It is a common fallacy to urge, as instances of things indifferent, such actions as sitting or standing, &c. (which Plato calls in the Gorgias τὰ μεταξὺ,) for these belong to man, as he is a *living*, rather than as he is a *moral*, agent. And yet even such ordinary actions of a man's life may be of far greater importance than he is apt to think. However, St. Paul's instance (1 Cor. viii.) is a good one. Now there is certainly a *Christian* way of viewing things *according to their tendencies*, in favour of which we must except, while we protest against what is commonly called the Utilitarian view.

According to the Ethical system of Dr. Paley, we are to measure Good by Utility, and to ascertain Utility by Experience. "The qualities of actions," he says, (Evidences, vol. ii. c. 2.) "depend entirely upon their effects; which effects must all along have been the subject of human experience. When it is once settled, no matter upon what ground, that to do good is Virtue, the rest is calculation. But, since the calculation cannot be instituted concerning each particular action, we establish intermediate rules; by which proceeding the business of morality is much facilitated; for then it is concerning our rules alone that we need inquire, whether in their tendency they be beneficial; concerning our actions we have only to ask, whether they be agreeable to the rules." Compare with this, Aristotle, (Pol. vii. 4. among many other places,) ἀλλὰ τὸν πρακτικὸν οὐκ

ciple, (to say nothing of the Evangelical,) according

ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι πρὸς ἑτέρους, καθαπερ οἴονται τινες, οὐδὲ τὰς διανοίας εἶναι μόνας ταύτας πρακτικὰς τὰς τῶν ἀποβαινόντων χάριν γινομένας ἐκ τοῦ πράττειν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον τὰς αὐτοτελεῖς, καὶ τὰς αὐτῶν ἕνεκεν θεωρίας, καὶ διανοήσεις. Ἡ γὰρ εὐπραξία, τέλος.

It must, indeed, be remembered, that Dr. Paley differs most materially from some later advocates of the system which he adopts, in admitting the Revealed Will of God as a Rule. Little, however, is, according to him, explicitly revealed on the subject of Human Duty; and with respect to what is not explicitly revealed, we are to be guided in our choice, or avoidance, of certain things and courses, solely by a calculation of consequences.

The recourse which Dr. Paley is obliged to have to this system of expediency, follows, 1. upon his limitation of the practical use of Holy Scripture; and, 2. upon his denial of the Moral Sense. For that, which, according to the opposite view, renders the recourse to the rule of Expediency *unnecessary*, is the persuasion, in the first place, that although Holy Scripture does not profess to solve *all* cases of Conscience, and to provide for all possible practical emergencies; it yet gives definite Principles of conduct, and a sufficient number of Instances of the practical application of those principles, both in the way of *Examples*, (above all the Highest,) and of special, though not perfectly definite, *Rules*, to assist those who study them in a docile spirit and with Prayer. The cases of conduct for which Holy Scripture does not either explicitly, or by plain inference, provide, will be found

to which means to the higher end are in themselves

wonderfully, I had almost said miraculously, few. And then, in the second place, for the instinctive suggestion of Duty, when there is little time for reflection, GOD, we believe, has implanted in our minds a sort of Monitor or Guide, (call it what you will,) not *natural* in any such way as to be all at once, or even speedily, fit for use; but yet something more than the mere result of Education and Habit: a capacity of judging right, and acting well, which, even with the scanty measure of Light and Help enjoyed by Heathens, was capable of being formed into a sufficient "Law unto themselves;" and which when expanded and informed by the Holy Spirit as Christians know Him, amounts to a Guide, whose dictates may be trusted without doubt or hesitation.

The case by which Dr. Paley seeks to overthrow the existence of a Moral Sense is, as every one knows, worth just nothing at all. He puts an extreme hypothesis; and takes credit to himself for overthrowing it; leaving untouched the real question at issue. He supposes the advocates of the views against which he argues, to say, that a Savage may grow, all at once, into a Casuist; and having easily proved the absurdity of such a notion, conceives that he has done enough to refute the opinion of those, who contend for the existence of a Moral Sense under the *ordinary circumstances of Human Nature.* It is likely enough, as Professor Sedgwick well remarks[a], that a person, who had been shut up in a dark room all his life, would not be able to distinguish objects when first introduced into

[a] Discourse on the Studies of Cambridge.

subordinate ends, which, if wrong, can no more be the object of a right moral aim[p], than the choice of them, in their other character of means, can be the act of a rightly disciplined Prudence. The practical Intellect and the moral Affection, according to Aristotle, are so blended in act, (however for the convenience of discussion regarded as separate,) that the former is never exercised by the responsible agent, without some bias, good or bad, from the latter. The performance, therefore, of an act which is, in itself, plainly wrong, can never by its respect to any other object, however excellent, be rendered even indifferent, far less right. Aristotle's beautiful theory is, that the Practical Intellect, and the Virtuous Disposition, grow up from childhood, like twin sisters, together; the natural faculty[q] of the

the light; but who would thence infer, that there is no Sense of Seeing?

Now I contend that, with all these helps to right decision, a man has no need to make Expediency the rule of his conduct. I believe that if he be diligent in the *practical* study of Holy Scripture, and constant in Prayer and religious Ordinances, God will make His way so plain before his face, that there will remain but little need to determine the character of actions by reference to results, which are, at best, but probable.

[p] Ὄρεξις.

[q] Δεινότης.

intellectual, and capacity[r] of the moral, part of our nature, with which we are born, strengthening and improving with every act of rightly-directed Intellect, and wisely-regulated Virtue. The effect of every moral[s] act of the responsible agent is to give shape to the originally unformed materials, and to expand the originally undeveloped germs, of Moral and Intellectual Excellence. In their highest advancement, the Intellectual element takes the form of practical Wisdom[s]; the moral, that of Virtue, properly so called[t]. In their lowest degradation, the one terminates in craftiness, the worker of all evil[u]; while the place of the other is occupied by a depravation of principle, confirmed and irremediable[x]. And every act and word and thought of our lives is tending, how gradually and imperfectly soever, to one or other of these extreme states. Human nature, according to Aristotle, does not exhibit, in its ordinary appearance, the extreme on either side. No man, as the Satirist says, was ever all at once thoroughly vicious; and equally gradual, on the other side, is the formation of Virtue. Instances, indeed, there have been, according to Aristotle, of superhuman virtue, as well as vice; the virtue of

[r] Φυσικὴ ἀρετή. [s] Φρόνησις. [t] Κυρία ἀρετή.
[u] Πανουργία. [x] Μοχθηρία, φθαρτικὴ τῆς ἀρχῆς.

demigods[y], and the vice of monsters[z]. And these unusual forms of good and ill he makes the ultimate points of his system; the extreme wings, as it were, of the line; leaving the front occupied by more ordinary shapes of the same opposite qualities; and making most prominent those characters, which our experience, as well as his, pronounces the most common; the Continent[a] and Incontinent[b]; of whom the former generally, though not habitually, allows his principle to prevail against his temptations; and the latter yields to temptation, though not without a struggle; the former being in the way towards confirmed virtue, and the latter declining towards hardened vice.

I cannot imagine a more interesting task for the Christian student, than that of comparing this finely-drawn picture with the Scriptural account of our moral and spiritual condition. There are (the supporters of the ultra Calvinistic view of our nature) who will consider it as opposed, in every essential respect, to the Evangelical account of our moral condition. Their theory more resembles the Platonic; favouring the notion of a continual war between the

[y] Ἡ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς ἀρετή. [z] Θηριότης. [a] Ἐγκρατής. [b] Ἀκρατής.

Spiritual principle, and the essentially, unchangeably, corrupt body.

But to return. Plato, the great advocate of the Intellectual principle in its abstracted and purely contemplative exercise, had maintained, that where this is perfect, moral irregularity is impossible. No man (he said) could act wrongly against *Knowledge*. This question Aristotle discusses [b] in a way, which those, who might differ about other parts of his system, would agree in considering to be thoroughly right. Change the terms, and the controversy assumes an entirely Christian aspect. It is, says Aristotle, a verbal question. What do you mean by Knowledge? If mere *head-knowledge*, the intellectual conviction of certain truths, the experience of every day proves, that with such knowledge moral irregularity may consist. If, on the other hand, be meant the knowledge which a right Moral principle involves; a coincidence between the movements of the Heart, and the decisions of the Intellect; with such knowledge in its perfection, Vice would be wholly incompatible. And what, we may ask, is knowledge like this, but that Belief of the heart no less than of the head, which, based upon a rational conviction of the understanding, has

[b] Eth. l. vii. c. 3.

been not confirmed merely, but informed, and made more keen-sighted, by those holy actions, which are at once its helps and its results; the nourishment of the tree, and its fruit? He, in whomsoever this principle of Faith is deeply set, and thoroughly perfected, "sinneth not[c]."

Political views of Aristotle and Plato.

The difference of system which exists between the Ethical views of Aristotle and Plato, is, in like manner, to be traced between their respective views of Political questions. Aristotle every where provides for man as a compound; for the sympathies of his Moral, as well as the capabilities of his Intellectual, nature. Plato, on the other hand, goes far towards excluding the former from his ideal system of excellence; as so many hindrances to the clearness of judgment, and the firmness of principle. But each philosopher recognizes, in a degree, the views of the other. Aristotle never speaks of his master without consideration and deference[d]; nor does he

[c] 1 St. John iii. 9.

[d] There is something very beautiful in the delicate circumlocution with which Aristotle refers to the opinions of his Master when obliged to combat them; (Eth. l. i. c. 6. and again referring to him under the character of Socrates.) He calls him, however, by his right name when he *praises* him.

deny, that if human nature could be remoulded, the Platonic theory would be best suited to its perfection. Plato, on the other hand, whensoever he stooped from his reveries to the world about him, was compelled to modify, at least, if not to contradict, his theories. Of this, his Treatise on "Laws" is a remarkable proof. He had framed his "Republic" upon abstract and utterly impracticable principles; and he finds at length, that Government, being a practical matter, must be adapted to the actual circumstances of mankind. He plainly shews, in the prosecution of his new work, that he is continually acting "against the grain." Many a sigh (as it has been well said*) does he cast after the ideal standard of the Republic. But his wings, which availed him when in the air, are an encumbrance to him upon the ground, and must be clipped. He is compelled, however reluctantly, for the vagueness of Theory to substitute the definiteness of Law; and to restrain by Punishments where he would fain engage through Benevolence.

Aristotle, meanwhile, in Politics is still the

* "Il y a dans toutes les parties des Lois un retour continuel, et comme *un soupir* vers la Republique." M. Victor Cousin, Argument des Lois de Platon. (Œuvres traduites. Vol. vii.)

been not confirmed merely, but informed, and made more keen-sighted, by those holy actions, which are at once its helps and its results; the nourishment of the tree, and its fruit? He, in whomsoever this principle of Faith is deeply set, and thoroughly perfected, "sinneth not[c]."

Political views of Aristotle and Plato.

The difference of system which exists between the Ethical views of Aristotle and Plato, is, in like manner, to be traced between their respective views of Political questions. Aristotle every where provides for man as a compound; for the sympathies of his Moral, as well as the capabilities of his Intellectual, nature. Plato, on the other hand, goes far towards excluding the former from his ideal system of excellence; as so many hindrances to the clearness of judgment, and the firmness of principle. But each philosopher recognizes, in a degree, the views of the other. Aristotle never speaks of his master without consideration and deference[d]; nor does he

[c] 1 St. John iii. 9.

[d] There is something very beautiful in the delicate circumlocution with which Aristotle refers to the opinions of his Master when obliged to combat them; (Eth. l. i. c. 6. and again referring to him under the character of Socrates.) He calls him, however, by his right name when he *praises* him.

deny, that if human nature could be remoulded, the Platonic theory would be best suited to its perfection. Plato, on the other hand, whensoever he stooped from his reveries to the world about him, was compelled to modify, at least, if not to contradict, his theories. Of this, his Treatise on "Laws" is a remarkable proof. He had framed his "Republic" upon abstract and utterly impracticable principles; and he finds at length, that Government, being a practical matter, must be adapted to the actual circumstances of mankind. He plainly shews, in the prosecution of his new work, that he is continually acting "against the grain." Many a sigh (as it has been well said[e]) does he cast after the ideal standard of the Republic. But his wings, which availed him when in the air, are an encumbrance to him upon the ground, and must be clipped. He is compelled, however reluctantly, for the vagueness of Theory to substitute the definiteness of Law; and to restrain by Punishments where he would fain engage through Benevolence.

Aristotle, meanwhile, in Politics is still the

[e] "Il y a dans toutes les parties des Lois un retour continuel, et comme *un soupir* vers la Republique." M. Victor Cousin, Argument des Lois de Platon. (Œuvres traduites. Vol. vii.)

same as in Ethics. Never having given countenance, otherwise than hypothetically, to the visionary system of Plato, he is here enabled to pursue his inquiries without the need of continual protests against the expected charge of inconsistency. He is still, as before, the philosopher of *experience;* but of experience, as contradistinguished not from first principles, but from impracticable theories. He argues not from facts[f] to principles to the same extent as Plato argues from principles to facts[f]. The basis of his inquiries is intermediate ground; the subjects of *knowledge*[g] whether abstractedly certain, or verified by ourselves[g]. Aristotle had too deeply imbibed from his master, the love of first principles; was too strongly impressed, through early prepossession, against that dangerous philosophy, which had no higher end in view than the "useful" and the "pleasant;" which identified Truth with Opinion, the "following of Nature" with the indulgence of some predominant passion, to lose sight in Politics, any more than in Ethics, of the essentially "good" and "honourable" as the true standard of right. He admits, indeed, what he was too wise to doubt, that the Legis-

[f] Οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρχῶν καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς λόγοι. Eth. l. i. c. 4.
[g] Τὰ γνώριμα (ἁπλῶς καὶ ἡμῖν.) Eth. lib. i. c. 4.

lator must sometimes lower his ground; put up with the best practicable, rather than the best conceivable, state of things[h]; but he takes at the same time good care to make us feel, that he regards such lowering of standard *as* a concession to circumstances, an alternative of evil; not the realization of the Philosopher's fond wishes; may we not almost say, of his prayers[i]?

Concession to circumstances how far right.

Aristotle's problem is the Christian's problem also. How to concede to the actual state of human nature, in such sort and degree as to preserve the highest standard inviolate; to hit the mean, and adjust the balance, between visionary notions of perfection on the one side, and a tame acquiescence in imperfection on the other; between trying unwisely to precipitate what all

[h] Λέγω δ' ἐξ ὑποθέσεως τἀναγκαῖα, τὸ δ' ἁπλῶς τὸ καλῶς. αἱρετώτερον γὰρ μηδένος δεῖσθαι τῶν τοιούτων (τῶν ἀναγκ. sc.) αἱ δ' ἐπὶ τὰς τιμὰς καὶ τὰς εὐπορίας ἁπλῶς εἰσι χάλλισται πράξεις· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἕτερον κακοῦ τινὸς αἵρεσίς ἐστιν· αἱ τοιαῦται δὲ πράξεις, τουναντίον. Ar. Pol. lib. vii. c. 12. And again; δεῖ ..... τ' ἀναγκαῖα καὶ χρήσιμα πράττειν· τὰ δὲ καλὰ δεῖ μᾶλλον. Οἱ δὲ νῦν ἄριστα δοκοῦντες πολιτεύεσθαι ..... οὔτε πρὸς τὸ βέλτιον τέλος φαίνονται συντάξαντες τὰ περὶ τὰς πολιτείας, οὔτε πρὸς πάσας τὰς ἀρετὰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν παιδείαν, ἀλλὰ φορτικῶς ἀπέκλιναν πρὸς τὰς χρησίμους εἶναι δοκούσας, καὶ πλεονεκτικωτέρας. Lib. vii. c. 13.

[i] Κατ' εὐχήν.

should nevertheless aim at, and striving only to correct where we ought to elevate; to determine, in fact, the point, at which, on the one side, Hope becomes Enthusiasm; and, on the other, needful concession sinks into unworthy compromise; this is (I suppose) one of the greatest of practical difficulties to those who are called upon to regulate any community of whatever extent. This difficulty is sufficiently attested by the way in which War, Oaths, Capital Punishments, &c. have been, on the one side, assailed, and, on the other, defended; the opponents often arguing, as if it were quite plain that we could, in our present state of advancement, do without such things; the advocates equally often, as if we had nothing better [k].

[k] The principle to be kept in view, in such cases, is that of which much has already been said; never, viz. to do (plain) evil that good may come. Some governments abroad, e. g. openly sanction places of vicious resort, upon the alleged ground of avoiding greater evils. Our own Articles allow of war, &c. in cases of necessity. These are evils also, but of a different kind from the before-mentioned. Taking away human life, under certain circumstances, is permitted in Holy Scripture. But sins (such as certain foreign governments sanction) are *under no circumstances* allowed by the same Authority. The execution of a criminal, or even the sweeping away of a whole nation in war, is not *necessarily* an evil (in the truest sense

Aristotle, in his Political, as in his more strictly Ethical, Treatise, agrees with the best Christian Moralists in paying respect to the constitution and instincts of our nature. Using the word Nature precisely in Bishop Butler's sense, Aristotle declares, that then only when opportunity is given to man of satisfying his social instincts, is he properly in his *natural* state[k]. Upon the subject of Particular Attachments, and the limitation of Property, he takes against Plato precisely the ground[l] which a Christian would take against a mere Philanthropist; arguing, with respect to the first, that they are in reality favourable, rather than adverse, to a wider Benevolence; and with respect to the second, that it has a direct tendency to promote the virtues of Self-denial, and Liberality.

of the word) to either; because their *souls* may be preserved. But *sin*, unless repented of, (and we cannot command repentance, as we can command sin,) can lead to no other result, than the ruin of the soul.

The plan, suggested by some politicians of the present day, of making a state provision for the Romish Priests in Ireland, with a view to some expected political advantages, is an exemplification of the same *Principle of government*, as that which leads abroad to the public protection of Vice.

[k] Pol. lib. i. c. 1.

[l] Pol. lib. ii. c. 1.

Solution of Heathen difficulties by Divine Revelation.

Divine Revelation has some counterpart (as we may say) to all these various political systems. The standard of the "Laws" of Plato, as compared with that of the Republic, is the standard of the Jewish Dispensation as compared with that of the Christian [m]. It contemplates a system of government, in which definite Law is the rule, and immediate Punishment the check. It is true, that the distinct, though subordinate and incidental, recognition of Evangelical Motives in the Law of Moses, prevents our regarding that Dispensation as exclusively (so to speak) *legal;* while its Divine Origin equally forbids all thought of its imperfection, however it may consist with the admission of its incompleteness. Still, however, the characteristics of the Mosaic Dispensation, as contradistinguished from the Christian, are *Visibility*, and *Positiveness*. It is the system according to which children are educated, and was adapted therefore as well to the natural temper, as to the peculiar circumstances, of the Jews.

Again, in Plato's Republic, there are many features which render it not unworthy of being

[m] For the suggestion of this parallelism, as well as for much other valuable information on Moral Philosophy, the Author is indebted to the present Professor of that subject in the University of Oxford.

regarded in the light of an ardent anticipation of the Christian Polity. It indicates a dissatisfaction with all existing systems, and a longing after something better, which Plato could not realize, and which the Gospel has realized. Plato had in his mind some well-grounded, but indistinct, notion of Unity. This object he failed to realize; not because it was imaginary, but because he wanted (necessarily) the materials for realizing it. He needed, in order to effect it, a clearness and comprehensiveness of view, which no Heathen could possess; an eye which could pierce the thick veil of the World, and discern the Invisible; connecting the things of time with the things of eternity, Saints living with Saints departed. For want of this knowledge, Plato was led into all those extravagances and inconsistencies, which Aristotle has so well exposed in the Politics. The one was right in the conception; the other in his objection to the details of the plan.

Evangelical view of special ties.

For instance, does not the Gospel, while it so far condescends to us as men, as to recognize and sanction the use of particular attachments, still merge (to a certain extent) those attachments in the common sympathies which bind together members of the same Church? introducing a new and common element into our regards, which has the wonderful effect of heightening

their intensity, while it widens their sphere of exercise. Subordinate those regards are to be kept, and made subservient, to the spiritual tie, and the common interest, which includes them, while it goes beyond them. The Gospel has reconciled what Heathens deemed irreconcilable. "It remaineth" (saith St. Paul) "that those who have wives, be as though they had none[n]." Again, in the beautiful picture of disinterested Love prevailing in the Apostolic Church, who does not see the justification of other theories of the Republic? "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common[o]." The Heathen Philosopher had manifestly an idea, which the Gospel has perfected, of some bond more intimate, of some sympathy more universal, than any special tie of benevolence can constitute or create. Yet they have undoubtedly erred, who have attempted forcibly to remodel the later Church in this instance, according to the plan of the earlier; not seeing, with Aristotle, that Love cannot be forced; that Poverty is an incalculably less evil

[n] 1 Cor. vii. 29. See also St. Matt. xxii. 30. Cf. Plat. de Rep. and Arist. Pol. lib. ii. c. 1.

[o] Acts iv. 32.

than the sacrifice of an important Evangelical principle; and that, pending a more perfect state of things, one act of unfettered benevolence outweighs a thousand of forced contribution.

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.